

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

#InclusionWorks

October 2016

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“Our nation’s most successful companies proudly make inclusion a core value. They know that inclusion works. It works for workers, it works for employers, it works for opportunity, and it works for innovation.”

— Jennifer Sheehy

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy

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National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a time to recognize the significant contributions American workers with disabilities make each and every day. The theme for this year is “*#InclusionWorks.*”



It is an opportunity for us to reaffirm the Department of Defense’s (DoD) commitment to recruit, retain, and advance people with disabilities throughout our workforce.

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NDEAM dates back to the return of Service members with disabilities from World War II, sparking public interest in the contributions of people with disabilities in the workplace.



In 1945, President Harry S. Truman approved a Congressional resolution declaring the first week in October “*National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.*”

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The word “physically” was removed in 1962 to include individuals with all types of disabilities.

In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to “*National Disability Employment Awareness Month.*”

Upon its establishment in 2001, the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy assumed responsibility for NDEAM and has worked to expand its reach and scope ever since.

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People with disabilities are a heterogeneous group that includes people with sensory, physical, and mental conditions.

People with disabilities cross lines of age, ethnicity, sex, race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

It is a group anyone can become a member of at any time. Almost all of us will encounter a disability at some point in our lives.

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As the Nation's largest employer, DoD employs thousands of workers with disabilities. DoD has long been a leader in recognizing the strengths and values Individuals with Disabilities (IwD) bring into the workforce. The DoD remains committed to providing every person opportunities for a meaningful career.

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By increasing awareness for **all members** of the workforce, we build a culture that embraces diversity and inclusivity.

The DoD recognizes its vital role in advancing disability awareness in the workplace.



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Rather than be defined by disability, these individuals featured in this presentation are the sum of their many life roles—which includes working in jobs they love.

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Justin Whitlock Dart, Jr.

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For over three decades, Justin Dart Jr., known as “*the father of the Americans with Disabilities Act*” and “*the godfather of the disability rights movement*” was a leader in the disability rights movement, and a renowned human rights activist.

Dart was born on August 29, 1930, into a wealthy and prominent family. He would later describe how he became “*a super loser*” as a way of establishing his own identity in this family of “*super winners*.”

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He contracted polio in 1948 leaving Dart a wheelchair user. He said, *“I count the good days in my life from the time I got polio...Beautiful people not only saved my life, they made it worth saving.”*

Dart dedicated the rest of his life to advocating for human and disability rights. Through his lifetime he received five presidential appointments and numerous honors, including the Hubert Humphrey Award of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

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In 1998, Dart received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, one of the nation's highest civilian awards. *"Justin Dart,"* said President Bill Clinton, *"in his own way has the most Olympian spirit I believe I have ever come across."*

After receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom, he sent out replicas of the award to hundreds of disability rights activists across the country, writing that, *"This award belongs to you."*

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Dart was at the lectern on the White House lawn when the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law on July 26, 1990.

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Master Chief Petty Officer
Carl Brashear

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Carl Brashear joined the U.S. Navy at the age of 17 in 1948. In 1953, despite repeated attempts by superiors to dissuade him from pursuing his dream of becoming a navy diver, he was assigned to the Diving and Salvage School in 1954.

In 1966, he supported the retrieval of an atomic bomb from a submerged U.S. Air Force bomber. During the recovery, Brashear's leg was crushed and later amputated. He began a grueling physical therapy regimen.



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In 1967, after recovering from his injuries, he reported to Harbor Clearance Unit Two Diving School for training. A year later, he became the first amputee in naval history to be restored to full active duty.

Four years after the accident, Brashear beat daunting odds and became the Navy's first Black Master Diver. He earned one of the nation's highest military peacetime awards, the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, and the second highest civil service award, the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

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Wilma Mankiller

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Wilma Mankiller was born in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, on November 18, 1945. Always passionate about helping her people, she worked for the government of the Cherokee Indian Nation as a tribal planner and program developer.

In 1979, Mankiller nearly lost her life in a car accident. She underwent numerous surgeries as a part of a long recovery process. During her rehabilitation, she was diagnosed with a neuromuscular disease known as myasthenia gravis (a chronic autoimmune neuromuscular disease).

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In 1985, Mankiller became the first female principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, the highest-ranking position in a major tribal government. After leaving office, she continued her activism on behalf of American Indians and women.

She was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in New York City in 1994 and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.



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After learning of Mankiller's passing in 2010, President Barack Obama issued a statement about the legendary Cherokee chief:

“As the Cherokee Nation’s first female chief, she transformed the nation-to-nation relationship between the Cherokee Nation and the Federal government, and served as an inspiration to women in Indian Country and across America. Her legacy will continue to encourage and motivate all who carry on her work.”

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Lieutenant Colonel David Rozelle

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Lieutenant Colonel David Rozelle is the first soldier since the Civil War to lose a limb in combat and redeploy to the same battlefield.

His introduction to the Army began as an ROTC cadet at Davidson College in North Carolina, where he graduated in 1995. After his commissioning, he served in a number of armor and cavalry assignments before 2001 when he received his orders to report to Fort Carson. *“9/11 is a special day for me, it's the day I reported for duty at Fort Carson,”* Rozelle said.

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In 2003, shortly after arriving in Iraq, an anti-tank mine blew off (then) Major Rozelle's right foot and part of his leg below the knee.

After his injury, he was determined not to let the wound define him, and instead vowed to return to service in Iraq. Once his wound healed, he dove into rehabilitation and was fitted with an artificial foot and leg. He returned to Iraq for two additional tours.

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"I didn't let that landmine injury define me, I made it so my recovery from the landmine injury and my return to war was what defined me," he said.



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Staff Sergeant Stacy L. Pearsall

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Staff Sergeant Stacy L. Pearsall got her start as an Air Force photographer at the age of 17. During three tours in Iraq, she earned the Bronze Star, Air Medal, and Air Force Commendation Medal with Valor.



Combat disabled and medically retired from the military, she now plays a pivotal role in changing and implementing new policy regarding veteran's healthcare at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, S.C.

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Additionally, she is a spokeswoman/advocate for the Veterans Affairs, Defense Centers of Excellence, Bob Woodruff Foundation, Independence Fund, and the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program.

She's been honored as the Air Force Veteran of the Year by the Air Force Band, presented the Trojan Labor American Hero Award, honored with the Daughters of the American Revolution Margaret Cochran Corbin Award, lauded by the White House as a Champion of Change, and holds an honorary doctoral degree from The Citadel.

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Pearsall remains dedicated to assisting women combat veterans seek and receive the care they need and deserve through all channels necessary. She is involved in disabled veteran outreach and recovery care coordination through numerous organizations.

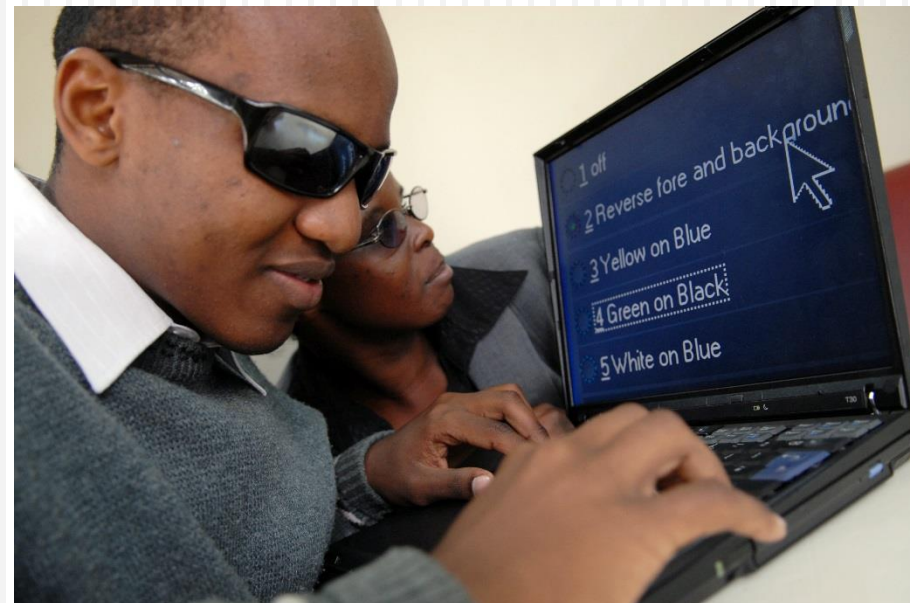
She said, *“Attitude is everything and you’ll only get back what you put in, so give your all and never give up.”*

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Each person brings to a job unique skills and abilities. Equity, dignity, respect, and cooperation among all individuals are essential values in the DoD work environment.

The DoD has an ongoing commitment to an inclusive Total Force, where qualified men and women of all walks of life can pursue their full potential.



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This month we express our deepest gratitude toward Americans with disabilities, from disabled Civilians and Veterans serving in our Civilian workforce to Service members returning home as Wounded Warriors.

These courageous men and women have overcome physical and emotional difficulties with strength and resiliency.



SOURCES

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